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Control 4935

Rec'd March 10, 1950
12:48 p.m.

FROM: Brussels

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 376, March 10.

LIBRE BELGIQUE today publishes following:

"Among documents submitted Tuesday to press by secretary of King, there appears in Annex 72 of the supplement an unedited letter of the Princesse de Ligne addressed to Mr. Pirenne under date of February 27, 1950. Following is letter:

Dear Sir:

Referring to our conversation of this afternoon, I beg leave to summarize here principal points of my interview with Mr. Charles Sawyer, Ambassador of USA in Brussels in 1945. One day Ambassador telephoned me at eleven in morning and asked me to come immediately to his office 'having great news to announce to me'. I went at once and found him in his office walking up and down. Once door was closed, he told me (in English) 'I want you to be first to know that your King has been liberated this morning and I expect he will be here this afternoon'. 'Furthermore', he added 'sit down because I am expecting a telephone call from General Patch on this matter'. In effect, some minutes later, general was on phone. Of course, I did not hear more than replies of Ambassador who seemed consternated. After having hung up, he said: 'Patch tells me airplane is ready', all dispositions have been taken and King is 'clamouring to leave', but that he (Patch) has just received orders forbidding him to let King leave - that, furthermore, he is going to telephone Washington and that he will telephone me back as soon as possible

'About an hour'

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-2 #376, March 10, from Brussels.

"About an hour later, or perhaps less, general was once again on phone. Reply of Washington was to conform to orders received."

"There you have, dear sir, some more precise details which I feel it right to give you. Very truly yours, (S) Noailles, Princesse de Ligne' (wife of former Belgian counselor in Washington now Ambassador to India)".

LIBRE BELGIQUE continues, "this testimony by Princesse de Ligne is certainly serious. Without a doubt, it could be confirmed by Sawyer who is at present Secretary of Department of Commerce in Washington. This testimony explains by itself order given several weeks later to American troops stationed in region of Treves to stand ready to seize person of King if he should be found at approaches to Belgian frontier. Testimony of Princesse de Ligne is also more interesting because certain people had placed in doubt existence of such an order.

"Who could have given an order to General Patch to prevent King not only from returning immediately to Belgium, but to prevent him accordingly from returning to country without permission of allied military authorities? Knowing what we know today, and we shall later explain at greater length what really took place, we can scarcely eliminate Washington; and even London, since 'lack of sympathy toward King (to employ a diplomatic term) was manifest at Downing Street. We recall famous 'marginal notes', still mysterious".

"It remains for us to suppose order communicated to General Patch came through intervention of SHAEF Mission to Belgium an Anglo-American military organ commanded at that time by English General Erskine and whose mission, both military and civil, consisted essentially, as we shall see, in maintaining order at rear of Allied Armies, as well as in aiding economic restoration of country".

"Why did SHAEF intervene in order that military orders should be sent to General Patch enjoining latter to prevent King from returning immediately after his liberation?"

"But, we have already

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1376, March 10, from Brussels.

"But, we have already suggested on January 27 last that intervention of SHAEF in this affair could only have been strongly influenced by pressure from Belgian government, or in other words, Van Acker Government which was of a Socialist majority and in which PSC members did not demonstrate at all any exceptional firmness. Van Acker government was nevertheless legitimate government and SHAEF in supposing that such was formal desire of governments of London and Washington could not exercise authority to bring King back to Belgium if legitimate Belgian Government was opposed to it".

MURPHY

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